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THE FORKS OF THE ROAD

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

THE FORKS OF THE ROAD

BY

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HISTORICAL REVIEW

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1916

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Set up and electrotyped. Published April, 1916.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

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NOTE

THIS book has been awarded the prize, offered by the Church Peace Union, for the best essay on War and Peace.

THE FORKS OF THE ROAD

I

THE SCANDAL OF THE CENTURIES

THE outbreak of the present war was greeted by a chorus of exclamations over the failure of Christianity. That such an eruption of violence should occur in the midst of a civilization claiming to be Christian seemed to onlookers in the neutral nations something unnatural and shocking.

Such a reaction of the popular mind against the phenomena of war was a little surprising. Was the world ever before shocked to an equal degree, by

the outbreak of any war? I cannot answer with assurance, but I do not recall any record of a similar revulsion of feeling at the imminence of warfare. The gates of Janus, not often shut in past centuries, have generally been flung open with a shout. We may count it a note of progress that they were opened this time with a groan that was audible all round the world. Former generations have accepted war as a matter of course; this generation was inclined to regard it as something anomalous and monstrous. And this revulsion of feeling was directed toward the coexistence with Christian civilization of a war as fierce and deadly as this was sure to be. That such horrible enginery of hate and destruction as the nations had been making ready, should be let loose, in the twentieth century after Christ, to ravage our fertile fields, and lay waste our homes,

and destroy our fairest works of art, and strew our plains with the mutilated corpses of millions of our young men, — while, on every side church spires were lifting crosses toward heaven, and men baptized in the name of Christ and going forth armed to kill one another, were praying to the universal Father in the words that Jesus had taught them — all this was a spectacle so ghastly, so revolting, so utterly insensate that the world held its breath in horror. It was the scandal of the centuries.

It was not true that Christianity was in any direct way responsible for the present war. The organizations which assume to represent Christianity have been, indeed, responsible for many bloody wars. From the days of Constantine down to modern times the church, led by popes and bishops and inspired by monks and missionaries, has often been on the

battle-field. Some of the fiercest wars of history, like the Crusades and the Thirty Years' War, have been fought by direct command of church officials and under their leadership. It is not so with the present war. It does not appear that ecclesiasticism, in any of its forms, had anything to do with inciting this outbreak. The interests involved were not connected in any obvious way with the Christian churches. The moral sense of mankind did not blame the churches for bringing on the war; the world was shocked, first, because of the coexistence of Christianity and war, and second, because of the promptness with which the Christians in all the belligerent nations rushed into the war. The moral sense of mankind — or what some of us would like to recognize as the moral sense of mankind, in its highest expression — appears to have reached a phase

of development at which it regards the coexistence of Christianity and war as a grotesque anomaly. The two institutions would seem to be mutually exclusive. Yet here is war, on the most stupendous scale known to history, spreading itself over a large part of the civilized world, and the Christian churches, in all the countries immediately affected, are not only offering no effectual resistance to it, but are giving to it, in sermons and prayers and the consenting voices of great congregations, their heartiest approval and support. I think that "the moral sense of most" has a right to be shocked and scandalized by this state of things and to call for an explanation.

Let us look at the fact of war as it is reported in the consciousness of the nation most closely allied to our own. We will not attempt the dreadful recital

of the physical facts of carnage and destruction, we will only listen to the report of what is going on in the minds of the people. These are the words of Professor L. P. Jacks, a teacher of Philosophy in Oxford University, and editor of "The Hibbert Journal": "Only a year ago we looked out into a future which was comparatively assured. We were laying our plans, buying, selling, marrying and giving in marriage, like the men of old before the Lord rained fire on Sodom and Gomorrah. Our sons were growing up and we were arranging their careers. Today our sons are in arms and under orders from the front, and as they gather round us for the parting feast we thank God that we cannot raise the veil of the future. Our families are threatened with possibilities of which we dare not think. Thus, at the very center of our life the menace begins, and it runs out-

ward until every idea, every habit of mind, every interest, every conviction has received its share of the shock — If you would conceive the state of our national psychology you must imagine how you yourself would feel and think if everything you had taken for granted and reckoned as secure, — your country, your home, your family, your property, your life, your ideals were suddenly menaced and bidden to defend themselves from destruction. A frontier settlement, in the old days, which had just received intelligence that a powerful tribe of Red Indians was on the warpath in the immediate vicinity; a populous city feeling the tremors of an earthquake which had already shattered its next neighbor — these are images which may help the reader to understand the psychological disturbance of England at the present hour. I do not mean that there

is panic; for there is none. England is calm, resolute, and prepared. Her teeth are set and she has braced herself to meet a tremendous shock." [1]

If we who dwell in the neutral countries have less reason for such disturbing terrors, there is still, for us, abundant cause for solicitude and alarm. We, also, are confronting the wreck and overthrow of all that is sacred and precious. When nearly all the civilized nations, comprising two-thirds of the population of the globe, are in a death grapple, and the ideas and institutions on which our own national existence rests are fighting for their lives, it does not require a prophet to convince us that we also are facing the most tremendous reality that the human race has ever been called to encounter.

[1] "Yale Review," April, 1915.

II

THE REAL THING

WHAT is this dread reality, this "Real Thing," which the Oxford professor finds us all "up against"? He does not define it, except by its effects. It is a profound dislocation of the existing order of things. It is a threat of devastation and chaos. Nay, it is more than a threat, the work of ruin is in relentless progress; millions of men have been slaughtered, hundreds of towns and cities destroyed, thousands of homes razed to earth, noble temples and monuments of art defaced or demolished, millions of acres of fertile lands laid waste, and, worse than all, the seeds of murderous hate have been sown in

the hearts of men, which threaten a dire harvesting. It will take the world long years to recover from the economic losses which it has suffered already, and the work of devastation goes on, with no end in sight. And who can predict the abatement of the enmities which make useful human intercourse impossible. Such are the effects of this Thing which we are confronting, but what is the cause? Is there not a cause? Is it something occult, unaccountable, preternatural? Is it some elemental phenomenon, like an earthquake or a cyclone? No: that indolent assumption must not be entertained. This "Real Thing" is a historical fact; it is nothing magical or mystical; it must have historical causes, and we can find them if we search for them.

Professor Jacks ventures one explanation. "The cause of the present war

is quite simple; some nation or nations *wanted* to fight. And I venture to think that so long as any powerful nation *wants* to fight, no human arrangement, no scheme of federation or international peace will prevent it from fighting." [1]

But this is too simple. The wanting to fight must be explained. There was a tremendous accumulation, somewhere, of inclination to fight, — an inclination that had been fed and nourished for long periods. Besides this there were, in all these nations, vast preparations for war, billions of dollars' worth of arms and implements of war in readiness for use, millions of men who had been trained in the arts of war. What needs to be accounted for is this aggregation of murderous hate and murderous machinery. This is not a mere impulse or

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 435.

sentiment, it is a product. It is an effect; what is the cause?

The universal belief of all the nations that all the other nations are actual or probable enemies, is the procuring cause of the armaments by which war is made, and of the wars in which the armaments logically issue. This belief in the universal enmity of nations — how is it engendered?

One theological answer is that enmity is the central principle of human nature; that it is natural for men to hate one another. This was the basis of the philosophy of Hobbes — that the natural state of man is a state of war. Not many theologians or philosophers put their theory quite so baldly as this; most of them shrink from saying that God made men to hate one another; but the assumption is general that after the fall of Adam the natural relation of

human beings became one of enmity. Among the regenerate, social and fraternal relations might be looked for, but nothing of the kind could be expected of the unregenerate; among them the only logical relations must be those of antagonism and strife. They are naturally "opposed to all good," and the central good of life is agreement and unity. Of course, then, they would be opposed to that on principle.

Not only so, "mankind by the fall lost communion with God and are under his wrath and curse." It would seem to be logical on this ground for the regenerate and the unregenerate to hate each other. The unregenerate are the enemies of God; can the friends of God be expected to be the friends of his enemies? It is true that it has never been possible to work out this theory; regenerate parents have not generally

been able to follow their logic and hate their unregenerate children, and there have been many beautiful friendships among kindred and comrades and neighbors where a stringent orthodoxy would have forbidden all such relations. Human nature will sometimes revolt against the most rigid theories; it refuses to be as inhuman as theology requires it to be. No doubt it thus furnishes additional proof of its own depravity.

While the theological theory of the natural enmity of human beings has sometimes been hard to believe, the theory of their natural selfishness has been readily accepted. That every human being will make his own interest central and supreme, and will seek it at the expense of the interests of his fellows, is generally accepted and approved as the natural law of human conduct. This is not regarded as the result of the

fall; it is supposed to be the normal action of the average man. God did not make men to hate one another, but he made them to look out, each for himself, and to keep the interests of others always subordinate to his own. "The great Author of Nature," said Malthus, Christian minister and political economist, "with that wisdom which is apparent in all his works," has made "the passion of self-love beyond comparison stronger than the passion of benevolence." And he proceeds to explain why it is that by pushing our own interests with no concern for the interests of others, we most surely promote the universal welfare.

This is the philosophy which has ruled our civilization hitherto. The centrality and supremacy of the individual has been the keynote of our political economy and our politics, until a very recent day.

Not less thoroughly has it dominated our religion, putting the stress of its hortation on the primary obligation of looking out for ourselves. All this was a grievous mutilation of the Christian morality, but it fell in with the prevailing theology and was supposed to reflect the Darwinian doctrine of the survival of the fittest; and thus it held its own, not only in the church, but in the school and in the senate and in the mart. It is evident that from a church nurtured in doctrines like these no effective opposition to war could be expected.

Until the last half of the nineteenth century this theory of the centrality and supremacy of the individual held nearly undisputed sway over the thought of Christendom. In the last decades of that century its domination began to be questioned. A remarkable increase in the study of the New Testament

brought into clearer light the ethics of the Christ, and made it impossible for some of us to worship the infinite Ego who was central in the systems of individualistic theology. It became evident that he could not be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. A revision of Darwinism also made it plain that the law of the ape and tiger was modified by the advent of humanity, and that Nature, when the facts were all in, did not warrant the individual in seeking his own, in disregard of the welfare of his neighbors. Herbert Spencer proved from the study of the lowest orders of life that altruism is not less primordial than egoism; that self-sacrifice is just as natural and just as necessary as self-assertion; and Henry Drummond and Prince Kropotkin have shown us how the struggle for life even among the grasses and the flocks and the herds is

lifted up and transfigured in "the struggle for the life of others."

Thus we hear the first note of a positive reaction against that philosophy of individualism which has dominated Western civilization until a recent day. It has gained enough control of the world's thought to make itself audible in the outcry against war which was heard at the outbreak of this infernal conflict; but it has yet by no means become the ruling idea in the minds of those who direct the policy of the nations. Nor is the popular mind of Christendom by any means purged of these notions. The mind of the multitude, even of those supposed to be educated, is not at all clear upon the fundamental laws of life. You will hear thousands of intelligent men contending in the streets today that the old law of eat and be eaten is regnant in human society and

must always be; that the big fish have always devoured the little ones and always will; that it is only silly sentimentalists who blink at these hard facts. It is not Bernhardi or Treitschke alone who propagate the gospel of force; there are plenty of Americans who profess their faith in it, most of whom, thank God, would be ashamed of living up to it. Social theories, like the tails of snakes, often keep on wiggling long after life has gone out of them. But there is still enough of vitality in these individualistic theories to muddle the heads of millions. The outstanding fact is that there has been no clear and coherent teaching respecting the foundations of the social order by the Christian church; the law of love has been preached, but for the most part it has been regarded as having a partial and rather esoteric application to human

relations; it was not supposed to be a practical rule in trade or business of any sort; it could not be followed in politics; it was a counsel of perfection rather than a rule of conduct.

Thus the kind of morality for which the Christian church has stood sponsor has been a very equivocal rule; it could not furnish any adequate guidance for human society. Not many of those who profess and call themselves Christians have any consistent theory of human conduct. Handling ordinary social relations so timidly and with such vacillation, how could it be expected to deal efficiently with international relations? If it cannot make its influence felt in the suppression of strikes, in the exploitation of the weak by the strong, in the growth of monopoly in democratic society, what reason have we to expect that it would make an effectual

protest against war? The fact which this war has brought most strongly to light has been the inadequacy of the moral leadership of the Christian church, which is due to the feebleness of its grasp upon the fundamental laws of life. This is the fact which the preceding sketch of the relation of the Christian church to the moral development of society most strikingly reveals. The business of the church is to teach men how to live. The present condition of the world both within and among the nations of the earth is evidence that this business has been but indifferently done. Would it not be well for those who are called to the leadership of the churches to consider carefully, at this juncture, some of the simpler elements of the social order, to which, hitherto, they have given but indifferent attention. Such a study will show us what the church

could do, what it has done and what it has failed to do, and it will bring us near to the sources of that enmity of nations which is the root of all our wars.

III

THE ORGANIC LAW OF HUMAN SOCIETY

HUMAN beings are made to live together upon this planet and to find in mutual co-operation a large part of the good of being. The law of life is therefore love or good will. They are sharers in one another's welfare; each one is largely dependent for his happiness on the well being and well doing of his fellows.

This is the organic law of human society, which it is the main function of the church to understand and apply; it is as truly a natural law as gravitation or chemical affinity; it is not dependent on any positive enactment, human or

divine; men are so made that if they recognize this principle of solidarity and conform to it in their conduct they have health and prosperity and peace.

This is known as Christ's law. It is his because he gave it form and currency; his disciples gratefully and reverently connect his name with it; but all intelligent Christians know that he simply formulated the principle which was impressed upon human nature by the Author of our being. Jesus declared it and incarnated it; but it has been the law of human conduct ever since humanity existed upon this earth, and it always will be, in every world inhabited by men. But this law is constantly violated by those who insist on discriminating their own interest from and exalting it above that of the community, on preferring their individual good to the common good, and on using their

fellows, as far as they can, as means to their own ends.

The natural and inevitable consequence of this violation of the natural law of life is the cultivation of the spirit of ill will, in those who practice it and in those who are the victims of it. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." To sow ill will is to reap ill will, thirty, sixty, an hundred fold; for this is seed which rarely fails to catch. Every man who seeks his own interest at the expense of his neighbors naturally becomes their enemy and makes them his enemies. Unless his egotism is well concealed they soon learn to hate him. Out of this sowing spring the animosities and the hostilities which infest our social life, and often break out in destructive conflicts. These social disturbances are apt to be considered merely as causes of social loss or injury. We shall never

make much headway in dealing with them until we have learned to regard them as consequences, as penal consequences, of violated law. Every strike is a retribution inflicted upon the community for its sin. It is the direct and inevitable result of the violation of the law of good will. It is evidence that groups of men have been seeking their own interests at the expense of their neighbors. When large groups combine in such struggles the consequences are apt to be serious. But these consequences are simply retributive — they are the natural results of disobedience of the law of life. When men refuse to obey the law of life they must suffer the penalty. And no penalties are more swiftly paid than those by which the law of good will is armed. It brings not only immediate and serious injury to the individual transgressor, but it

introduces into society inflammations and conflagrations of the most destructive sort.

There are few practical questions which are so little understood by the people of the churches, and by those outside the churches, as this matter of the primary law of human conduct. There has been no lack of preaching of law and penalty in orthodox pulpits, but it has been largely the darkening of counsel by words without knowledge. The law, as it has been preached, was simply the requirement of moral perfection, and the effort of the preacher has been to prove that such a law could never be obeyed and that the penalty of the law was eternal punishment. The one great business of men in this world as the pulpit has enforced it, is to escape from this threatened penalty by accepting the substitute provided.

When they have done that, their anxieties about law and penalty are at an end.

As for the law of love, it is, of course, regarded as the idealization of the moral law which men are required to obey; but, for practical purposes, it is considered as a bit of mild counsel, with no assignable sanction; of course we all break it every day and always shall, but the penalty of such disobedience is simply eternal punishment; and if we have secured ourselves against that by the substitutionary arrangement referred to, all is well with us, and if we have not, it is not inflicted until after death, and there will be abundant time to avert it by prudently repenting. In fact, however, nobody seems to believe much in hell in these days; the orthodox ministers are always joking about it; and it is difficult to believe that a good God would consign to everlasting and reme-

diless suffering his own creatures. And since this is the only kind of penalty they know anything about, the multitude see no reason why they should greatly trouble themselves about it. In fact (so they often argue) we are constantly told that Christianity is a religion of love, and if this is so all violation of its law will be leniently dealt with. If the Christian law is the law of love how can there be any penalty?

Such is the mental muddle in which the current orthodox teaching is apt to leave the minds of those who listen to it. Of the real nature of the law of love as the law of life, of the ways that it has of enforcing itself, of the deadly reactions of disobedience to it in the soul and in society, how dim are the conceptions of the multitude! What shall be said of the teachers of morality who permit the generations to grow up

under the delusion that the law of good will is only a sentimental counsel of perfection or pious advice, and that infractions of it are punished, if at all, in some remote and semiconjectural futurity? How can they conceal from the sight of men the terrible facts which are daily transpiring before all who have eyes to see?

We often hear orthodox teachers sneering at the law of love as a mere sentimentality — "gelatinous" is the term by which they are apt to characterize it. It is sentimental in just the same sense that the laws of hydrostatics or electro-dynamics are sentimental; it is derived from a book in the same way that the law of gravitation is derived from a book; it is an induction from the facts of life; and its sanctions no more depend on any positive injunction than do the sanctions of the law of dietetics.

If you eat poisonous or indigestible food, the retribution is not deferred until after death and the judgment, nor is there any scheme of substitution by which you may evade the penalty; it follows the transgression instantly and inevitably. Not less swift and certain are the consequences of every violation of the moral law. The reaction of the evil deed upon the mind, the heart, the will of the evil doer is utterly inescapable. Transgressions of the law of love register themselves instantly in the character of the transgressor. They darken his judgment; they inflame his passions, they mar his relations with those from whom he has withholden the good will which is their due. We hate those whom we have injured, so long as the injury is unrepented of and unforgiven. We cannot help it, we are made that way. Not only is every selfish act a

manifestation of an unsocial nature, it tends to make the man who does it more unsocial. Selfishness breeds hate, and hate, as Jesus has told us, is incipient murder. Such is the penalty of the law of love in its reaction upon the individual. Upon society its effects are no less deleterious. Every violation of the law of love sets up irritations, resentments, suspicions, jealousies, which disturb all human relationships, which tend to break out in quarrels and collisions of will, and to make helpful human relationships difficult or impossible. The enmities and fightings which keep human society in turmoil are thus perfectly explicable; there is nothing occult or mysterious about them; if they should cease we should know exactly how to go to work to reproduce them; if we should conclude that they are undesirable we know how to get rid of them.

About all this how much do the people know who are led into the churches by the current popular evangelism? Not so much as they ought to know. Some of them have gained an inkling of it; to not a few among them these deeper and larger meanings of life have been revealed; but by most of those who magnify and extol what they call "the good old gospel," truths of this nature are but dimly apprehended. What the real forces are which are shaping their own lives and the life of the society in which they live, they very imperfectly understand. And they do not see that because of their failure to understand these things, they are cherishing influences and habits of thought and speech and action which can only result in filling the earth with bitterness and strife and contention. That they understand them so imperfectly is mainly the fault of Christian teachers.

IV

THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE

TO a considerable extent modern civilized society has got rid of enmity and conflict. Life is not all strife and contention; in the lives of most of us there are many serene and restful days; we prosecute our callings in a fair measure of peace and find ourselves gladly co-operating in many useful and harmonious ways with our fellow men. Within the boundaries of the great nations these relations of amity between individuals have been gradually strengthening; the fact of our interdependence has been forcing itself upon our thought; the sense of solidarity has been deepening; in constantly en-

larging groups we have been learning the value of co-operation.

That this is due in considerable part to the influence of Christianity can hardly be gainsaid; in spite of its utterly defective administration, the teaching and spirit of its Founder have to so great an extent leavened society that egoistic conduct has been measurably discredited, and many have learned to praise and not a few to practice the principle of good will.

Doubtless, also, the lesson of experience has been learned by many with whom the precepts of Christianity have had little weight; for wherever the law of love has been given a fair trial it has demonstrated its practicality. Thousands of traders have found, by actual trial, that it is more profitable for them to work together than to make war on one another, and the merchants and manufacturers in nearly every line of

business have formed associations, and are meeting, constantly, to consult about their mutual interests. The change in this respect which has taken place within the last twenty-five years is significant. The great consolidations which have appeared in industry are also due in part to the same discovery. And the unions and federations of labor are witnesses to the truth that the good of life is found not in isolation, but in co-operation.

The recognition of the regnancy of this truth is, however, still very partial. Many who profess to believe it have never fully grasped it, and there are multitudes as we have seen who frankly and even scornfully repel it, denying the possibility of making good will the supreme motive of conduct; affirming the centrality of the egotistic motive and basing upon it their entire philos-

ophy of conduct. The impossibility and even the absurdity of disinterestedness, the certainty that every man will make his own interest the ruling motive of all his choices is the professed creed of a multitude. The man in the street affirms it somewhat less confidently than once he did, but he keeps affirming it.

Such a philosophy has been encouraged by much of our popular religion which has presented God as the infinite Egoist, doing everything for his own glory, and has made its strongest appeal to the self-interest of men. It can hardly be a matter of wonder then that the central law of conduct has been so feebly grasped by the great majority of men; and that there are so many who, though accepting it in some of their human relations, contemptuously reject it in others; — business men, for example, who have come to believe rather

enthusiastically that good will and co-operation are most valuable in their relation with other business men, but regard them as quite out of the question in their relations with their employees; and wage-workers who have discovered that it is a good thing to be friends with other wage-workers, but who cannot regard those who pay them their wages in any other light than that of enemies. So it comes about that while good will to some extent controls the relations of many individuals, it is often entirely ruled out of the relations of classes. Our bitterest and most destructive social conflicts arise from this source; they are the penalties inflicted upon society for its failure to apply the principle of good will to all human relations.

Thus it appears that human society is yet but imperfectly organized; a large share of the individual wills of which it

is composed yield an imperfect obedience to its organic law; many groups are in concerted rebellion against it. There is enough respect for it and voluntary obedience to it to keep society from chaos, and to produce large and precious results of social welfare; but there is also enough of disobedience to it to fill the best society which we have yet seen with strife and confusion. Wherever it is obeyed it brings peace and welfare and happiness; wherever it is disobeyed it brings disturbance and conflict and fear.

Thus "the Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness" is seeking to educate mankind into the obedience of the law of life. What an old prophet reported Him as saying a good many years ago, he has been saying to every generation in the reactions of the laws which are impressed on human nature: "Behold I have set before you life and

death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life." But life must be chosen; it is a good that cannot be ours unless we choose it, and therefore the education of mankind proceeds slowly. The good can well afford to wait. "He that inhabiteth eternity" is never in a hurry. It goes slowly, but it goes. The reign of good will is wider and stronger far than it was one thousand years ago, or even one hundred years ago. Many of us have rejoiced to see its empire broadening and deepening within the nations even in our own day.

Within the nations its great conquests have been won in the social life and the political life of the great nations. It has abolished slavery. It has lowered the barriers of caste. It has led in democracy. It has lightened the burdens of the poor and opened to them the door of opportunity. It has given

honor to women, and is now proceeding to clothe her with political power. It has widened the range of human sympathy and deepened the springs of pity. All this has been done for the humanization of the relations of men within the nations. Even from such partial acceptance as has been given to the law of good will by the individuals and the groups which make up the life of the several nations, such benefits as these have resulted.

Between the peoples, also, of the several nations, many bonds of amity, many co-operative relations have been established. Commerce has been weaving the ties of mutual service; travel and migration have been promoting acquaintance and friendship. We have even been hoping for a world commonwealth in which we might all be fellow citizens.

V

THE KINGDOMS OF ANTICHRIST

THE new elements which have entered into human thought during the last half century are certainly significant. Such revisions of the old theology as have found acceptance in the churches, with the corrections which the later thinking has compelled, of the first crude inferences of Darwinism have resulted in those humanizing influences which are reviewed in the last chapter. These meliorating tendencies have by no means worked themselves out into the popular belief; it takes time to knead the leaven of rational good will into the lump of the popular intelligence; but there are signs

that the old individualism which so long dominated human thought and ruled the current theology is yielding to a larger view in which the individual, instead of discriminating his interest from that of the community and seeking first his own salvation, shall identify himself with the community, and seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, finding himself, and securing his own welfare, not by struggle against his fellows, but by co-operation with them. This, undeniably, is the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and if the Christian church had been loyal to it, in its simplicity, strife and warfare would have disappeared from the earth long ago. How much has been accomplished even by such qualified and apologetic credence as the Christian church has given to it we have seen in the last chapter. It would seem that with such fruits in sight the Chris-

tian church might have been emboldened to accept the teachings of its Founder and commit itself unreservedly to the doctrine of the Kingdom. This it has never yet done, and accordingly we find intrenched in Christian society and tolerated if not cherished by the Christian church, strong influences and institutions which are distinctly and defiantly anti-Christian.

Industry, politics and war are all outside the pale of Christian ethics; the principles which rule in them are in direct and flagrant opposition to the principles laid down by Jesus Christ as fundamental for human society. The Kingdom of God for which we daily pray can never come until these institutions are revolutionized; that is to say, the Kingdom could not come without destroying or undermining the foundations on which they rest.

Let us consider what this means. I have said that industry as at present organized, is on an anti-Christian basis. Trade, as we have seen, has felt the influence of Christian ideas, and shows signs of responding to them. Merchandising no longer wishes to associate itself with piracy or plunder. The idea prevails that trade may be of mutual advantage both to buyers and to sellers. Not only so, the merchants themselves are learning to co-operate; friendly associations among them are multiplying; it is beginning to be evident that the good of life may be shared among them. No doubt there is still in this realm sufficient selfishness, but the fact is that the spirit of good will has a far larger recognition among traders than it had twenty-five years ago.

Respecting the organization of industry so much cannot be said. The industrial

world is divided into two distinct classes, and the relations between these are not friendly but antagonistic. Despite all the arguments by which economists have sought to prove that the interests of employers and employees are identical, the practical fact is that as classes they are arrayed against each other and are seeking to gain their ends, not by co-operation, but by strife. There are employers who wish to promote the interests of their workmen, and there are employees who cherish kindly feeling toward their employers, but individuals of both these classes who cultivate such pacific sentiments are apt to be under the suspicion of their associates; to be a friend of "capital," or to treat it with consideration, is to be regarded by "labor" as an enemy, and *vice versa*. The relations between employers and employees are maintained by a series of struggles,

very destructive of life and health and happiness, in which each side seeks, by inflicting suffering and loss upon the other, to gain the advantage. The agreements on which such struggles are brought to an end are generally regarded as truces; the conditions presuppose the renewal of the conflict at no distant day. The last phase of this warfare is the proposal of the laboring class to exterminate the employing class, and by force or economic pressure to take into their own hands all the instruments of production. Clearly this is war; it is a direct repudiation of the law of life; it is a distinct refusal to recognize good will and mutual service as the foundations of human society. There are those, as I have said, who struggle against these forces which make for antagonism and strife in industrial society and who seek to bring in a better day, but the prevail-

ing tendencies are still unsocial and anti-Christian.

Of party politics the same thing must be said. Party politics is, confessedly, warfare. Parties are not organized to co-operate with each other, but to defeat and thwart and cripple each other. Each gains its end by disparaging and hindering the work of the other. Any measure proposed by one party will be likely to be criticized, in no sympathetic temper, by its adversaries. Any man nominated for office by either party may expect to have his misdeeds and deficiencies mercilessly brought to light by his rivals. There is much less of this now than once there was; but the traditions of the ape and tiger period in politics still linger, and any one who lives in a region where politicians are active becomes painfully aware of the fact that there is a large realm of human activity

in which the law of good will is flouted as utterly impractical. These antagonisms of politics are not always deadly; the wrath which they invoke is often more humorous than terrifying, and is rehearsed derisively the day after election; but they are, nevertheless, sufficient to keep alive many a root of bitterness and to prevent or hinder the friendly co-operations in which neighbors might unite for the common good. The spirit which animates party politics generally, with the slander and detraction "which do either accompany or flow therefrom," is as far from Christianity as the East is from the West; and it furnishes another instance of the failure of the church to enforce its message in the great realms of human activity.

Of all the kingdoms of anti-Christ, however, the most powerful is the realm of international relationships. Here the

principle of good will has found but scant recognition. Between nations no such obligation has been acknowledged, or if in any sense it was admitted, it was at once distinctly consigned to a subordinate function. Reciprocity between states has not been provided for by the laws and usages of nations; it was distinctly a new note when John Hay, in his negotiations with China, declared that the United States intended to govern itself, in its dealings with other nations, by the Golden Rule. That each state will make its own interest paramount is the nearly uniform assumption. That a nation should love its neighbor nation as itself, would be regarded by the average diplomat as an extremely sentimental proposition. Each nation must, of course, love itself supremely; international relations are founded, ultimately, on

"The good old rule, the simple plan,
That he should get who has the power,
And he should keep who can."

Good will may be permitted to play some subordinate part in national intercourse, but the fundamental assumption of every nation is that every other nation is a probable enemy. Every armament is the advertisement — the proclamation by the nation — of its lack of faith in the existence of good will on the part of its neighbors; of its unwillingness to trust in the law of love as the basis of national relationships. Every fort, every battleship, every regular army regiment, every militia organization, is a confession of the national faith in force rather than in good will.

If it is not a declaration of its own purpose to invade and overpower weaker

peoples it is an accusation against other nations, — a confession of its suspicion that some or all of them are likely to invade and plunder it, unless it is armed against them.

Such is the state of mind in which we find the leading nations of the earth, the nations which call themselves Christian. It is a state of mind with which all intelligent Christians should make themselves familiar, and should endeavor to understand and explain. This state of mind is the one important fact with which the world, at this crisis, has to deal. It is the spirit of militarism which is now before the world's judgment seat, and the Christian church is deeply concerned in this inquiry, because the spirit of militarism has entered into and taken possession of what we call Christian civilization. For the health and sanity of the ideas which control Chris-

tian civilization, the Christian church is responsible. What then is this spirit of militarism to which we owe the present condition of the world?

On the threshold of this inquiry, questions will be raised as to the rightfulness of defensive wars. It is assumed that national self-defense is justifiable and it seems to be easy to prove that all war is defensive. That claim is confidently set up by all the combatants in the present war. When all other subterfuges fail the "preventiv Krieg" is a convenient contrivance for cushioning the national conscience. If you can only convince yourself that an enemy is getting ready to strike you, it is only self-defense to strike first. Such devices are amply furnished by the philosophers of militarism.

Seriously, however, the rights of self-defense are not to be questioned, and the

duty of using force to prevent injustice may sometimes be imperative. An innocent nation may sometimes be dragged into war. That the Belgians were constrained to resist the invasion of their territory is no sure proof that they had not been cultivating the sentiment of brotherhood.

But when the nations of the earth are visibly engaged year after year in building forts and forging cannon, and launching fleet after fleet of battleships, each bigger and deadlier than all which have gone before, and inventing more and more hellish implements of destruction, — some of them forcing their young men to give years of their lives to study of the art of killing, it seems well-nigh certain that they do not hold themselves subject to the laws of the Kingdom of heaven. Those nations of which it can be truly said that this is a large part of

their occupation must surely be in a state of mind out of which war is bound to come. Those nations which are expending the larger part of their revenues in preparing for war cannot be in a Christian state of mind. Say what we may about the justifiability of defensive war, the mental and moral condition of the nations which in times of peace are deliberately getting ready to kill each other, cannot be in accordance with any precept or principle of the Christian religion. This preparation cannot proceed, as it has been proceeding during the last half century in all the nations which call themselves Christian, without the most flat repudiation of all that is central and vital in Christian morality. It cannot proceed except upon the assumption by each nation that some or all of the other nations are bent on attacking and destroying a friendly and

defenseless nation. For itself each nation, of course, claims to be free from all such predatory purposes. Equally of course it must accuse some or all of the other nations of being governed by such predatory purposes, else its herculean labors of preparation for defensive war would be absurd. For some or all of the other nations which it thus accuses it must therefore be cherishing fear and suspicion and consequent enmity. Those who are inciting this work of preparation for war must needs be cultivating in the minds of the people such fears and suspicions toward some nation or other as alone could warrant so heavy a drain upon its revenues. Of course, under such conditions, the relation of this nation toward the other nations of whom it entertains such suspicions must be more and more strained. No nation can thus suspect

another without the other's knowing it and resenting it. Between nations thus regarding each other, an occasion for war will easily be found.

This is the psychology of war. It originates in a state of mind. And the state of mind in which it originates is the antithesis of the Christian state of mind.

It is evident that the principal European nations, though nominally Christian, have been, during the last generation, in a highly unchristian state of mind. They have not been dwelling, in their thoughts, upon the fact of universal brotherhood. They have been thinking much more upon national enmities; they have not been studying the things that make for peace, but the things that make for war. They have been building ships and gathering armaments and drilling soldiers and manufacturing the

machinery of destruction. Most of this has, indeed, been done under the inspiration of a few leaders, but no such preparation for war can be carried forward in any nation without at the same time sedulously educating the people in the probabilities of war and getting them into a state of mind which will insure the efficient use of this machinery when the time comes.

In the meantime what have the leaders of religious thought, the representatives of Christianity, been doing? Some of them, it is fair to say, have been doing what they could to counteract these tendencies to enmity and to cultivate the spirit of friendship among the nations. There has never been a day when the disciples of Christ were all wholly unmindful of their calling as the messengers of the gospel of peace, and in the last generation that obligation has been more

widely recognized than ever before. Nevertheless it can hardly be said that the churches of Jesus Christ as a whole have laid great emphasis on this truth. The church at large has not been greatly interested in the peace movement. In the face of this mighty world-preparation for war it has not found it necessary to put forth any special efforts in behalf of peace. Its main interests have been lain in other fields. The fact that this tremendous accumulation of the machinery and munitions of war has been going forward with increasing purpose and volume from year to year, is pretty good evidence that no effective resistance has been made against it.

It may be said that the Christian churches could not have stopped this movement if they had tried. That I do not believe. There are said to be seven hundred thousand Christian

ministers in Europe and America. If they had set themselves with a reasonable degree of unanimity against the war propaganda, basing their opposition on the principles of Christ's gospel, their protest would have been heeded. But we shall never know whether the protest would have been successful or not, because it was not made with any force. And it ought to have been made.

It may also be objected that the Christian leaders had other important work to do. Had they really any work more important than this? What was it? Was it the saving of souls? But how are souls lost more hopelessly than by filling them with murderous hate of their fellow men? Was it to rescue men from hell? But here were several nations organizing hell and bringing it to earth. Was this fact hidden from their view or was it a light concern of the ambassadors

of Christ? Indeed, in view of all that was going on before their faces it is hard to think of any business more urgent through that eventful generation than the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom the gospel of human brotherhood. The fact that it had been culpably ignored through the former generations was not a good reason for neglecting to emphasize it in the hour when it was needed most.

VI

THE THEOLOGY OF MILITARISM

SO ineffectual has been the protest of the Christian church against the growth of militarism that its protagonists among the war lords and their counselors and apologists have naturally concluded that the time has come to put an end to its pretensions. It can hardly be wondered at that those who are leading in the militaristic régime should begin to demand a distinct understanding as to the place which Christianity is to hold in the world order. It has been rather timidly claiming supremacy. Have not its claims been exorbitant? Is it not high time that our militant nationalism should be devel-

oping and propagating its own theology? It has been implicit, for a long time, in national policies, but it needs to be avowed and defended.

The first article of its creed is negative. It maintains that Christianity can have nothing to do with international relations; in that field its ethics have no pertinence. Between states force is the only arbiter; reason and good will are out of place in world politics. Such is the contention of some of those who are seeking to direct the destinies of nations. The Christian rule of life, it is affirmed, governs the relations of individuals, but not of nationalities — "Christian morality is based," says Bernhardi, "on the law of love. Love God above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself. *This law can claim no significance for the relations of one country to another,* since its application to politics

would lead to a conflict of duties. The love which a man showed to another country as such would imply a want of love for his own countrymen. Such a system of politics must inevitably lead men astray. Christian morality is personal and social, and in its nature cannot be political. Its aim is to promote morality of the individual, in order to strengthen him to work unselfishly in the interests of the community." [1]

This reasoning, it must be confessed, evinces a singular moral obtuseness. That the Christian law has application only to the life of individuals, and cannot guide men in their collective action, seems to be the contention. Would families, then, be exempt from its control? Would a family, acting collectively, be entitled to ignore the law of

[1] "Germany in the Next War," p. 29.

good neighborhood? If one family has friends in another family and seeks their welfare, does that necessarily imply a want of love among its own members? If a corporation considers the interests of others besides its stockholders — of its employees, say, — does this prove that it is false to its own interests? Just how large must a group of human beings be in order that it may regard itself as exempt in its collective action from the obligations of good will?

And why, let us ask in all humility, is it impossible to think of nations as dwelling together in unity, sharing the good of the world, treating one another as friends? I am not disposed to claim for the United States of America any moral superiority over other nations, but it has sometimes, I believe, acted in its dealings with other nations on Christian principles. It gave Cuba her

liberty, at great cost, and it claimed in return neither tribute nor dominion. It has governed itself by the same principle in its dealings with the Philippines. It had nothing to gain by its intervention there, and when the Philippines are set free, as they surely will be ere long, we shall be much poorer in purse, and none the richer in lands or prestige for all that we have done for them. And when the ten millions of indemnity money was returned to China, the act was certainly in the truest sense an act of Christian friendship. That was the motive which prompted it and the heart of the nation responded to the acts of its representatives with good will to China. Most distinctly also, did our Secretary of State declare, in the midst of these transactions, that the United States means to govern itself in all its relations to other nations by the Golden

Rule. There is nothing Utopian about this; this is history.

But it is objected that states cannot be expected permanently to remain in friendly relations because there is no tribunal above them by which their differences can be adjusted. "Above the rivalry of individuals and groups," says Bernhardi, "stands the law, which takes care that injustice is kept within bounds, and that the right shall prevail. Behind the law stands the state, armed with power which it employs, and rightly so, not merely to protect, but actively to promote, the moral and spiritual interests of society. But there is no impartial power that stands above the rivalries of states to restrain injustice and to use that rivalry with conscious purpose to promote the best interests of mankind. Between states the only check on injustice is force, and in morality

and civilization each people must play its own part and promote its own ends and ideals."

It is not many years since the same thing could have been said of individuals in all the lands of earth. The only check on injustice among individuals was force, and every man went armed to enforce his own claims and redress his own wrongs. There was no impartial power which stood above the rivalries of individuals to restrain injustice in any effective way, and there were many who argued that there should not be; that the abolition of private warfare would lead to effeminacy and degeneracy. But the time came when the reign of violence became intolerable, and ways were found of providing an impartial power to stand above the rivalries of individuals and preserve the peace of society. Is it not possible that states

may, for the same reason, come to the same conclusion? Is it beyond the power and the wisdom of states to create a tribunal which shall conserve their common interests and adjust their differences?

In 1789 there were upon this continent thirteen states whose interests were diverse, whose institutions were not identical, and between which there was grave danger of constant collision. There was no impartial power that stood above them to restrain injustice. It might have been plausibly argued that there could not be; that it would be a fatal thing for these states to relinquish any part of their sovereignty; that "in morality and civilization each people must play its own part and promote its own ends and ideals"; that "between states the only check on injustice is force"; that "no power exists which

can judge between states and make its judgment prevail"; that "nothing, in fact, (was) left but war to secure to the true elements of progress (in these states) the ascendency over the spirits of corruption and decay." [1]

It was not, however, so argued in our constitutional convention, and by bringing in the federal principle, these states found a way of preserving their own integrity while they merged some of their common interests and obligations; and, with the exception of one unhappy struggle, arising from the failure of some of them to give full weight to the federal obligation, they have lived together for a century and a quarter, each guaranteeing the security and peace of the others; each developing its own life in freedom; no state venturing to

[1] See "Germany and the Next War," pp. 20–21.

encroach upon the territory of its neighbors; every state profiting by the prosperity of all its neighbors. None of us on this continent can believe that a constant succession of wars among these states would have more effectually secured to the true elements of progress in each of them "the ascendency over the spirits of corruption and decay" than it has been secured by the nearly unbroken peace which we have enjoyed. And while the problem of federation in Europe would be much more difficult than we have found it among our American states, yet it is not beyond the possibilities that some application of the principle of federation would give to the United States of Europe or even to a league of all the nations, the same security and peace that we have enjoyed in the United States of America.

But the militaristic theology goes much

further. It is not because a world federation would fail to preserve the peace that it is denounced, it is because it might succeed in preserving the peace. The one undesirable thing is peace. The one thing needful to the preservation and development of the human race in its full vigor and efficiency is war. "War is a biological necessity of the first importance, a regulative element in the life of mankind which cannot be dispensed with, since without it an unhealthy development will follow, which excludes every advancement of the race, and therefore all real civilization." "A universal peace league would be disastrous to all human progress, which is dependent on the clashing interests, and the unchecked rivalry of different groups." "It is a persistent struggle for possessions, power and sovereignty which primarily governs the

relation of one nation to another and *right is respected so far only as it is compatible with advantage.*" "The state alone, so Schleiermacher once taught, gives the individual the highest degree of life. To expand the idea of the state into that of humanity, and thus to intrust apparently higher duties to the individual, leads to error, since in a human race conceived as a whole, struggle, and by implication the most essential vital principle, would be ruled out. Any action in favor of collective humanity outside the limits of the state and nationality is impossible. Such conceptions belong to the wide domain of Utopias." "This peace movement is often used simply to mask intensely political schemes. Its apparent humanitarian idealism constitutes its danger. Every means must therefore be employed to oppose these visionary

schemes." "The inevitableness, the idealism, and the blessing of war as an indispensable and stimulating law of development must be repeatedly emphasized." [1] Such is the theology of militarism, succinctly and copiously stated.

The first article of its creed is that the state is the Supreme Being, a law unto itself, ruling over all, responsible to none. The state is the custodian of all the higher interests, and there can be no power above it. The principle of the state's action is self-aggrandizement; it can owe to other states no duties which interfere with this.

The second article is that "the end-all and the be-all of the state is power, 'and he who is not man enough to look them in the face should not meddle

[1] "Germany and the Next War," Chap. I, *passim*.

with politics.' The advancement of the power of the state must be first and foremost the object that guides the statesman's policy. Among all political sins the sin of feebleness is the most contemptible; it is the political sin against the Holy Ghost." [1]

This takes the state out of the moral realm; the word right has no meaning in its application to the relations of states; international law has no force or significance with them; "*right is respected only so far as it is compatible with advantage.*" The word moral is, indeed, often used in connection with the actions of states, but it is vacated of all its meaning by the qualifications put upon it. "The acts of the state cannot be judged by the standard of individual morality." "The morality of the state must be developed out of its

[1] Treitschke, "Politik," 1, C. 3.

own peculiar essence, just as individual morality is rooted in the personality of the man and *his duties toward society.*" [1]

The italics are not the author's.

Is not the logic peculiar? These are the propositions:

1. Individual morality is rooted in man's relation to other men, — in "his duties toward society."

2. States can have no moral relation to other states; their morality must be developed out of their own peculiar essence.

3. Therefore the morality of states is developed "*just as individual morality*" is developed.

Nothing could be more convincing.

The relation of God to this scheme of things is not quite clear. He is occasionally mentioned, and his assistance, especially in war, is counted upon, but

[1] "Germany and the Next War," p. 45.

he does not seem to have much influence so far as international relations are concerned, except as a promoter of war. "God will see to it," says Treitschke, "that war always recurs as a drastic medicine for the human race." [1]

It would appear that each nation must have its own God; religion is a purely ethnical affair. It cannot be conceived that the God who is leading the Germans to battle and assuring them of victory is the God of the French and the British and the Russians and the Italians also. The identity of this God is imperfectly indicated; he is possibly the God of Joshua and Saul; he is certainly not the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

The future of nations under this régime is left in shadow. It seems probable that the lesser nationalities will

[1] "Politik," 1, p. 76.

disappear; they are regarded with disfavor; they lack "the end-all and the be-all of nations," which is physical power, and there can be no scruples about absorbing them, when the convenient juncture arrives. But it would also appear that the merging of all the nationalities in a single world-empire should be regarded with equal disapproval; for that would eliminate struggle and hasten degeneracy. What is contemplated seems to be the preservation of a few strong nations, each capable of maintaining itself in war, and of inflicting vast damage on its antagonists, so that the continuous struggle may be perpetuated, through which alone national vigor is preserved and augmented. The future of the race is therefore conceived to be an indefinite succession of devastating wars. Inasmuch as the arts and implements of war, upon the produc-

tion of which the efficiency of the nation will be concentrated, are sure to be increasingly destructive, the conditions of life upon the planet are best left to the imagination. It would seem to portend the speedy destruction of the human race.

It is doubtful whether this outlook will ultimately prove attractive to all the nations. From the destiny to which militarism is inviting them most of them are likely to draw back. And the time may come when, between the nations adhering to the militaristic program and those preferring a more pacific relation, a deadly conflict will ensue. For, on the militaristic basis, there does not appear to be any way of putting an end to militarism except by destroying the nations which make it the foundation of their existence. Is not this the tragedy of the situation, that nations,

adopting the maxim that might makes right, are driven, by the logic of events, into a coil from which they can only escape by exterminating each other?

Another highly probable consequence of the repudiation of morality in international relations would be the serious weakening of its bond within the nation. If force is the only arbiter between nations it will hardly be possible to maintain a higher principle in the relations of individuals or classes. A double standard of obligation will be enforced with difficulty. "It is not possible to conceive," says Mr. Hobhouse, "that we can put off our humanity or any other of the virtues of civilization in our dealings beyond the frontier, without impairing their sanctity and weakening the force with which they bind us in our dealings with one another. There is no evil power more deadly in public

affairs than that of the bad precedent. We cannot deny the validity of a moral principle in one relation without sapping its strength in all." [1]

No criticism of the militaristic theology has been more searching than that of Friedrich Nietzsche, who is widely reputed to be its chief prophet. Consistency is not to be looked for in the utterances of this vagarious thinker, but one comes on flashes of insight which are almost unearthly, and this is one of them:

"No government will nowadays admit that it maintains an army in order to satisfy occasionally its passion for conquest. The army is said to serve only defensive purposes. This morality, which justifies self-defense, is called in as the government's advocate. This means, however, reserving morality for ourselves and immorality for our neighbor, be-

[1] "Democracy and Reaction," p. 201.

cause he must be thought eager for attack and conquest, if our state is forced to consider means of self-defense.

"At the same time, by our explanation of our need of an army (because he denies the lust of attack just as our state does, and ostensibly also maintains his army for defensive reasons) we proclaim him a hypocrite and cunning criminal who would fain seize by surprise, without any fighting, a harmless and unwary victim. *In this attitude all states face each other today.* They presuppose evil intention on their neighbor's part and good intentions on their own. This hypothesis, however, is an inhuman notion, as bad and worse than war. Nay, at bottom it is a challenge and motive to war, foisting as it does upon the neighboring state the charge of immorality, and thus provoking hostile intentions and acts.

"*The doctrine of the army as a means of self-defense must be abjured as completely as the lust of conquest.*

"Perhaps a memorable day will come when a nation renowned in wars and victories, distinguished by the highest development of military order and intelligence, and accustomed to make the heaviest sacrifices to these objects, will voluntarily exclaim: 'We will break our swords,' and will destroy its whole military system, lock, stock and barrel. Making ourselves defenseless (after having been the most strongly defended) from a loftiness of sentiment — that is the means towards genuine peace, which must always rest upon a pacific disposition. The so-called armed peace that prevails at present in all countries is a sign of a bellicose disposition, of a disposition that trusts neither itself nor its neighbor, and, partly from hate,

partly from fear, refuses to lay down its weapons. *Better to perish than to hate and fear, and twice as far better to perish than to make oneself hated and feared. This must some day become the supreme maxim of every political community.*

"Our liberal representatives of the people, as is well known, have not the time for reflection on the nature of humanity, or they would know that they are working in vain when they work for 'a gradual diminution of the military burdens.' On the contrary, when the distress of these burdens is greatest, the sort of God who alone can help here will be nearest. The tree of military glory can only be destroyed at one swoop, with one stroke of lightning. But, as you know, lightning comes from the cloud and from above." [1]

[1] "Human, all-too Human: The Wanderer and his Shadow." Aphorism, 284.

Have we not found Saul among the prophets? The psychology of militarism, the true inwardness of "preparedness" — was it ever laid so bare? Must not every man who will take a little time "for reflection on the nature of humanity" know that it is absolutely true? If an angel with a trumpet could but fly over every camp and every court and every capital on the planet proclaiming these words with a voice of thunder, must they not carry conviction with them?

It is not to the war lords alone that these flaming words should bear reproof and admonition, but to the Christian church as well. Here is the message which she ought to have spoken and has failed to speak. Here is the very substance of that gospel of good will and peace which was committed to her trust and which she has wrapped in a napkin

and hidden under her altars. It has been left to a man who has made himself known as the contemptuous reviler of the Christian church to give expression to the teachings of Jesus Christ about international morality. If the seven hundred thousand Christian ministers had been faithfully preaching, for the last fifty years, this doctrine of Nietzsche concerning "the means toward Genuine Peace" this war would never have been begun. And nothing but a clear recognition of this truth will ever bring permanent peace.

VII

THE FORKS OF THE ROAD

FROM this survey of the spread of militarism one rises with some feeling of bewilderment and dismay. The heart cries out against the awful carnage which is raging, in which more than two million and a half of men have already been slain and many more made helpless for life; in which so many families have been pauperized and so many lives blasted and embittered, and which is still sweeping on with no promise of termination or abatement. Great God in heaven, is there no cure for this madness? Is there no force of reason, of justice, of pity, of shame, which can move upon the minds of

the few men who control this situation and are prolonging this agony? There is no sign or promise of any. So far as now appears this insensate destruction of all things fair and good will go on and on interminably. Both parties insist on continuing the fight until the other is crushed or crippled, and before this is accomplished a good share of the hardly won gains of civilization will have been cast into the abyss. Could some miracle open the eyes of the Kaiser to descry the dawn of that "memorable day" foretold by Nietzsche, when a nation renowned in wars and victories "will voluntarily exclaim, 'Let us break our swords,'" how soon all this misery would be at an end! And that nation, from that moment, would be the safest and most prosperous nation in the world. There would be room enough for it in the sun; all the gates would be open

to its commerce; all the seas would speed its ships; fearing no foes it would have no foes. If a country like Germany could fling into the pit its weapons of force, and go forth trusting in the might of good will, how soon the world would follow! The Kaiser has his eye on Alexander, or Napoleon, or that fierce Hohenzollern ancestor of his; the day is past for that kind of glory; but there is something within his reach, how much more glorious! If only he could see, even he, in this his day, the prize that is beckoning to him from the sky! But he will not see it; the mania of militarism is upon him and more or less of the same madness darkens the counsel of all the rulers; it has come to be an obsession that force is the only arbiter of national differences; there is no ruler in all these Christian nations who dares to trust in the might of the weapons

that are not carnal. So the war will go on. Apparently there is no remedy. It is hopeless to argue with the insane or to charm the deaf with soothing music. War is essential unreason, and no devices of man will rationalize its madness. It will cease when the belligerents are exhausted. Possibly one of the combatants may be a little less punished than the other, but the advantage is likely to be delusive; no matter how it ends, every one of the nations that has taken part in it will be vastly worse off than it was at the beginning, and they will all know that it is so. The victors, if there should be any who can claim victory, will be quite as sure of it as the vanquished.

When it ends some kind of tribunal will have to be assembled to parcel out the territory of the contending nations, and to distribute what is left of the

wealth of the world. There will be as many square miles after the war as there were before the war, but many of them will be greatly desolated and impoverished, and many of those who are left to occupy them will be maimed and naked and hungry and shelterless. Moreover, all these representatives of lately belligerent nations will bring with them the consciousness of the terrible burdens with which the war has loaded them. Before that Congress can assemble there will be time to count the cost of the war and to face the devastations it has wrought and the responsibilities which it has entailed. No reckoning so appalling as that will be has ever before been set before the human mind. No problem so stupendous as theirs has ever been attacked by mortal statesmanship. The exceptional dimensions of the events behind them and the

burdens upon them and the issues before them can hardly be ignored. It is fair to assume that the men representing the great nations in this council will be men with some knowledge of history, some adequate information respecting the existing condition of their own nations, some power of estimating the tasks upon their hands. Such men will not be able to exclude from their own minds the truth that the past holds in it nothing but admonition and warning for them; that all the traditions of diplomacy have been shattered; that the maxims and assumptions on which the publicists have tried to regulate national affairs are utterly discredited and exploded; that none of the contrivances by which temporary peace has been patched up in former days is today anything better than an awful example. What has it brought to the nations —

this whole policy of selfishness and strife on which hitherto all national relations have been regulated? It has made of our own populous cities heaps of ruins, it has clogged our harbors with wreckage, it has turned our fields and orchards into cemeteries; it has filled our streets with cripples, it has draped in black our public assemblies, it has heaped up mountains of national indebtedness which will sap the life of our laboring classes for generations to come. This is what militarism has wrought. It has led the nations through centuries of steadily accumulating disaster to this culminating catastrophe.

It will not be possible for these men to evade or ignore the fact that the collapse of civilization by which they are surrounded is the natural and inevitable result of the militaristic policy, the central assump-

tion of which is that some or all other nations are enemies.

Nor will they be able to hide from themselves the certainty that if each nation insists on continuing to be a law unto itself and on making its own interests supreme and paramount, the natural reactions will ensue, retribution will repeat itself and the same dreadful harvesting — only more dire and more universal — will be ready for the reaper before the end of another generation.

In short, the men who assemble to make the adjustments which will be required at the close of the war will have to face the fact that the law of cause and effect can no more be evaded by nations than by individuals. Looking backward they must see that in founding all their policy as nations on the principle of egoistic nationalism, they have daringly and defiantly

trampled under foot the law by which God has made men to live together. A more flagrant defiance of the natural order of the universe it would be impossible to imagine than that in which human governments have hitherto persisted. In these human governments are gathered up the highest forms of human activity. The responsibilities for right action of those who administer them are the most weighty with which men are endowed. Their functions are the most sacred, the most godlike which human beings are permitted to exercise. They, of all men, are bound to know the laws of life, and reverently to obey them. To conceive of them either as being unaware of the existence of these laws or as assuming that they have no application to nations, is impossible. And when in the face of heaven, rulers not merely ignore these laws but brazenly

set them at defiance, they are invoking a terrible retribution. That this war is the most deadly penalty which human nature has ever been called to pay is not to be wondered at; it ought to be; the crime is the most heinous that history records.

It can hardly be that the men who make up this council of the nations will be unaware of these facts. The spirit of humanity, "stabbed broad awake" by this hellish slaughter, will hold them sharply to the account. Is it conceivable, then, that they can consider the possibility of returning to the old basis of national egoism, and basing international relations on the presumption of war? I cannot think so meanly of humankind. I believe that the world has had its lesson, and that even the warlords must be in the way of learning it.

The crucial question for civilization

is the question whether this present world is learning it or not. Most of the discussion about the coming settlement of this strife rests upon the assumption that the representatives of the nations will come to this council with the same ideas in their heads that were there in July, 1914; that they will have the same notions about the adequacy of war to solve all national problems that they had then; that they will proceed to seek for some adjustment by which the smaller nations shall be compelled to take what the bigger ones choose to give them, and the big nations shall agree among themselves to abstain from war, temporarily, until they may repair their wasted energies, and rebuild their crippled armaments, and raise up another generation of young men for slaughter. The assumption of continuous war, and of war as the ultimate

and only final arbitrament of national differences is the assumption on which all international relations have rested hitherto. The common notion seems to be that that assumption will rule the thinking of the members of that conference. If it does so, the future of our race is very dark. If humanity has learned nothing in this *dies irae*, one wonders what will ever make it wise. I confess that I am unable to entertain such a benumbing conception. I cannot even imagine that this bloody lesson will be lost upon the world. The expectation that the representatives of the people will come together in that conference under the age-long obsession of militarism, prepared to commit the future of the world to the continuous artitrament of war, involves a degree of pessimism concerning human nature to which my mind will not go down.

The only other assumption to which this Congress can possibly come is the assumption that peace among the nations is the only conceivable international policy, and that the entire business of that august assemblage is to prepare the way of peace and to lead the peoples into it. In view of all that the world has seen of the inevitable consequences of the militaristic policy, it does not seem incredible that this conviction should be uppermost in the minds of these representatives. It is not a wholly visionary belief that the common sense of mankind will come out of this ordeal convinced that it is as stupid to go on building the welfare of the world on the basis of militarism as it would be to build a skyscraper on quicksand. And if that conviction shall have gained a hold on the thought of the world, it will be entirely possible to arrange a plan by which

all the resources of the nations shall be pledged to the maintenance of peace. What the details of that plan shall be I am not concerned to discuss; the first question is whether this shall be regarded as the fundamental assumption of international relations.

On one or the other of these assumptions the work of that assembly will be based. Its acts will make it plain whether it expects what we call civilization to go forward on a war basis or on a peace basis. Civilization is at the forks of the road. It is a great crisis in history. The nations may choose the way of life, or go on in the ways of death. And the Voice of the infinite Wisdom and Mercy is crying to the children of men today: "Turn ye, turn ye into the ways of life, for why will ye die?"

It would seem that there could be but

one answer to this call. *Every one of these contending nations declares this day that it is fighting to put an end to war, to make permanent peace possible.* That is something quite new under the sun. Never before were so many of the great powers of the world engaged in war, and never before have all the belligerents united in such a declaration. Is it not a sign of the times? If they are sincere they may all win what they are fighting for. That surely would be a glorious victory. And how easily it might be won, if they would all stop and determine not to shed another drop of blood. Why can they not see that war will not be ended by fighting, any more than fire will be put out by piling on fuel, or enmity extinguished by hating, or falsehood by lying, or sin by sinning? This is the immemorial delusion of humanity, and the only question respecting the

discontinuance of this war which has any interest for a sane man is the question whether this delusion may not be dispelled — whether this war, which in the vastness of its devastations utterly defies comparison with any of the wars which have preceded it, may not have forced upon the mad world some glimmer of the truth that its whole international policy has been utterly, brutally, stupidly wrong, and that the day of Judgment has come, with a mighty voice out of heaven calling to the nations to repent and turn. If the nations have not learned this truth, all the rest of their knowledge will be only a snare to them, smoothing the descent of Avernus.

What the belligerent nations are learning we cannot be sure; but it is of some importance to ask whether this nation, standing apart from the conflict and watching its progress, is learning any-

thing from the dreadful spectacle. What do the American people think their own attitude ought to be toward this inhuman business? I am sure that most of them are glad that they are not any more implicated in it than every nation needs must be; and that they are grateful for the steady hand which has guided us safely through the rough waters. Nor does there appear to be any present prospect that we could do anything to make peace. I think that there ought to have been from the beginning a concerted effort on the part of the neutral powers to bring influences to bear upon the belligerents in favor of armistice and mediation; at this juncture it seems doubtful whether such an effort would avail anything, but ought we not to try?

At any rate we are not unconcerned spectators; our interests are deeply

involved in the outcome of this war. Not only are our deepest feelings stirred by it, but our ideals are in the crucible; our institutions are under fire; all the great things that this nation stands for are to be vindicated or discredited by the issues of this conflict.

We have invested perhaps as much as any other nation in the future of civilization; and what that future is to be concerns us deeply. We want to protect our investments. As Owen Wister has said, we are in the boat, and it is part of our business to see that nobody rocks the boat. Freedom, social justice, democracy, opportunity, brotherhood — these are the things that are dear to us. We do not always cherish them so faithfully as we might, but they are, after all, the fundamental things in the life of this nation, and we want to see them prevail throughout all the world. We

know that they cannot prevail unless the world is at peace. We know that such a strife as this threatens them all, and that its perpetuation would render them all very insecure. We look forward, therefore, to the coming Congress of the nations with the deepest solicitude.

Probably we have a right to assume that we shall have some part in it. A tribunal that will undertake to make rules for the intercourse of the nations of the earth could not very well leave us out. And the question for this nation is, what things shall we stand for in that tribunal?

The fundamental question before that tribunal will be, as we have seen, whether the world shall prepare for the perpetuation of war, or for the prevalence of peace. The Council will provide for one or the other, and its decision will probably give direction to the life of the

world for the next twenty-five years. The United States will have a vote in that council. Which is it going to vote for?

It is time now to be making up our minds about this, for it is possible for us to drift or be driven into a position in which we can only vote the wrong way. I think that the great majority of Americans would vote today the right way on this question. But sinister and infernal influences are at work to push them into the maelstrom of militarism. There are hysterical alarmists who are magnifying the possibilities of invasion. There are tremendous financial combinations involving billions of capital, which stand to make immense profits out of war, and out of the preparation for war, and they are moving heaven and earth today to drive this nation into the complications which will put money in their purses.

And there are of course a good many partly developed human beings who are always infuriated by the smell of blood, and can never see any fighting going on without wanting to have a hand in it. The influences which are thus set in motion get possession of a good many of our newspapers and of some of our financial magnates and of a lot of emotional and ambitious politicians inside Congress and outside, and there is grave peril lest this nation should be stampeded into an attitude in which it can take no helpful part in the deliberations of the world tribunal.

Suppose that with this tribunal before our eyes, and our ears ringing with the assurances of all the belligerents that they are fighting to put an end to war, our Congress proceeds to appropriate $500,000,000 for the increase of our armament and the enlargement of our

armies. Can we consistently or decently go to such an international tribunal and lift up our voice in favor of a policy which looks toward the abolition of war?

I fear that our appeal would be listened to in a constrained silence. What would be said I cannot imagine; the reserves of diplomacy would all be maintained, no doubt, but under their breath these ambassadors of the great nations would be saying something like this: "Yes, we have heard that you, the young giant of the West, have desired to be prince among the peace-makers. But you have a queer way of going about it. While we have been getting surfeited with war, you seem to have been getting up an appetite for it. You heard us crying out, in the throes of our great conflict, that we were fighting to put an end to war. Did you think that we were

lying? Or did you, perhaps, think that when the rest of us were crippled by our losses and proposing to turn our swords into plowshares it would be a good time for you to reverse the process? Just what does this policy of yours mean? When we begin to suggest the possibility of sending some of our ships to the junk pile you spend a few hundred millions in building new ones and then come to this Congress. Do we understand that the new ships were built for the junk pile?"

Some such demands for explanation, much more politely stated, we would be likely to hear. They might be embarrassing. It is rather better, if possible, to avoid them.

Without, then, insisting on any high principles of pacifism in our present national policy it is at least reasonable to suggest that our nation, confronted

with the probable responsibilities of action in such a tribunal, can well afford to wait until the tribunal reaches its decisions before launching the country upon a policy of militaristic preparedness. If there were any reasonable fears of immediate invasion, we might bestir ourselves to get ready. If we are convinced of the insincerity of the declarations of all the great nations that this war must be the end of war, we may feel less sure of what should be our policy. But when issues of such tremendous importance to our nation hang upon the question, is it not wise to wait and see if they will not make good their promise. Our faith in their sincerity may help them to be sincere. Our demonstration that we have no faith in them will weaken their faith in themselves and their friendship for us.

If they shall agree upon a League to

enforce peace which promises to put an end to war, we shall have been delivered from a great burden; if they show by their action that they mean to perpetuate war, we shall have time enough before any of them are ready to attack us, to make such preparation as may be necessary.

The militarists and alarmists are all the while trying to excite our fears by pointing out the risk we are running by neglecting to make adequate preparation for war with nobody knows whom. Is there not at least equal danger that by making such preparation we may make our own nation a stumbling block in the way of a movement toward the world's peace?

VIII

WHERE IS THE CHURCH?

THE nations are at the forks of the road. Where is the church? The answer is an echo. Apparently it comes near to being a negligible quantity. If we cannot say that it is out of sight and hearing we must say that its presence makes little impression and that its voice is scarcely heard above the din.

His Holiness the Pope has been expressing some Christian regrets over the lamentable condition of Europe; he implores the faithful to desist from slaughtering one another, but apparently they have paid but slight attention to

him. Of course the Kaiser and the Czar and King George and President Poincaré and King Humbert are all much obliged to him for his good wishes, but they do not see their way clear to consider them at present. People who are lying awake nights for fear of what the Pope and the Curia may do to overturn governments and revolutionize society might well be reassured when they see how little poor Benedict is able to effect in a political way in the countries where his adherents are most numerous. We could all wish that his influence were far more potent in those countries just now, for we are sure that it would be exercised in behalf of peace. Unfortunately his church, like all the other churches, has stripped itself of the power of interfering effectively in a juncture like this.

As for the other churches it is plain

that the churches in England are in the war for England and the churches of France for France, and the churches of Germany for Germany, and the churches of Italy for Italy, and the churches of Russia for Russia, and the churches of Turkey for Turkey. There may be small groups among them whose hearts are not in the war, but as a rule the churches of all these countries are strongly supporting the military policy of their respective governments. Their members would vote, I suppose, ten to one, for the vigorous prosecution of the war until their side has won a decisive victory. So far as the churches are concerned they appear to be governed wholly by the principle of patriotism; their Christianity means patriotism; loyalty to their own country is their highest obligation, and there is nothing in their religion which practically limits that

obligation, or subordinates it to anything higher. The religion of all these warring Europeans, except the Turks, is therefore a type of nationalism baptized as Christianity, but not entitled to the name. There is no allegiance recognized as really superior to that required by the nation.

As we saw in the sixth chapter, General Bernhardi and the other publicists who have been formulating Hohenzollernism, have distinctly recognized this principle of the supremacy of the nation, and have worked out its implications in detail, making it clear that nationalism is the supreme religion, and that Christianity holds a wholly subordinate place in the nation's life. The other nations have not so frankly faced the truth, but it is practically implied wherever militarism rules.

We often hear the remark that all

these nations worship the same God. That is far from the truth. Each one worships a God of its own. "But is it not the God of the Bible?" it is demanded. Which of them? In the Bible there are "gods many and lords many"; the God of Jacob and his mother was not the God of Isaiah; the God of Deborah was not the God of Dorcas; the God of Joshua and Jehu was not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They may all have been called by the same name, but they were not the same character. And people who profess to follow the religion of the Bible are apt to choose the God whose character best suits their purposes. So it has always been with the nations. In a large part of the Old Testament the conception of tribal gods prevails. The Hebrews had their own God, Jehovah, and each of the surrounding peoples

had its own god. Jehovah cherished and protected his own people and fought for them against the gods and the people of the other tribes. These other gods and people were all his enemies and he was their enemy. But this particular God of the Hebrews was conceived to be superior to all the rest, and under his rule the people were constantly at war with the other nations round about them, maintaining the most exclusive and aggressive policy, and always ready to conquer and enslave those weaker than themselves. It was not until they had suffered many sore defeats and had been overthrown and humiliated and scattered by nations stronger than themselves, that they began to comprehend the folly of their tribal religionism, and to lay hold upon the larger truth of Monotheism, with its corollaries of the unity of the race and the brotherhood of man.

These truths which the prophets dimly discerned and which came to their glorious revelation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ were far from the thoughts of the early Hebrews; and the Scriptures in which their crude theology is recorded set before us conceptions of national relationships which are not much above the moralities of the wild woods. When, therefore, nations whose ideals are militaristic wish to furnish themselves with a religion, and are directed to the Bible which is guaranteed to be infallibly inspired and equally divine and authoritative in every part, they are able easily to furnish themselves with conceptions of God and religion which harmonize perfectly with the most unscrupulous and predacious policies. This, beyond a question, is what militaristic nations professing Christianity have always done. For confessional and liturgical purposes

they may adhere to the Christian God, but for the stern work of war they go back in their thought to Jehovah Sabaoth. He is their God. They can pray to him and sing anthems to him with no misgiving. Hymns of hate and battle songs harmonize perfectly with his character. It is easy for them to believe that he is their national God and that they can rely on him to aid them in their wars, whether of defense or of conquest.

It is not, then, so strange that so much religion should be mingled with war. The belligerents are not all praying to the same God. Each people is praying to its own God. No matter what the lips may say, no matter what names may be used, every militaristic nation in its heart believes in and worships a tribal God. It would be absurd for the Germans, if they believed that the French and the Belgian and the Russians

and the English are all children of their Father God, to pray to him for strength and skill to go out and kill their brothers. They do not believe anything of the kind, whatever their creeds may make them say. They believe that the God to whom they pray is their God; they are the children of his love, and that the others are his foes and theirs. Their real God is a tribal God. It is the only kind of God that any militaristic nation ever did or ever can worship.

The tragedy of the situation is in the fact that the Christian church which is responsible for the religious life of these nations has permitted them to propagate these tribal religions and still to call themselves Christians. For the Bible, which contains these ethnic elements, contains also the Christian faith up to which they led, and in which they merged, and which absolutely repeals

and abolishes them. For while Christianity grows out of the Semitic religions and incorporates their higher truths, its central principle is a direct contradiction of all the tribalisms and partialisms and particularisms on which the old faiths had been grounded and out of which war had grown. Its central idea is universalism, not in the narrow ecclesiastical sense, but in the sense which makes human relationship universal instead of domestic or racial; which teaches us to speak the word mankind, which puts humanity above nationality as the supreme object of allegiance. This is the differentia of the Christian morality, the ground of its claim to the acceptance of the human race. All the traditions of its origin culminate here. The angelic chorus announcing the birth of the Prince of Peace sang "Glory to God in the Highest, and on

earth peace, good will to men." The keynote is the promise of peace upon earth, and peace was to come through the presence on earth of brotherly men, friendly men. The suspicions and fears and enmities that had kept men apart were to cease; the day so long looked for had dawned, when men of all tribes and nations were to dwell together in unity, with none to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.

There were to be no enemies, no enmities, even the wild creatures were to lose their ferocity; the wolf would dwell with the lamb and the leopard would lie down with the kid.

And when the Prince of Peace himself came forth to take up the task committed to him, his first word had the same great import: "The Kingdom of heaven is here." It was the Kingdom of a Father. Our Father who art in heaven,

Thy Kingdom come! It was a Kingdom in which all citizens are brothers.

This is the primal, central, commanding truth of the Christian religion — the one truth which those who undertake to represent Jesus Christ on the earth are bound to make the burden of their message. It is a truth that wipes out all distinctions of caste, that annuls all repugnances of race, that breaks down the barriers of nationality. Read the record. It was a Canaanitish woman who won the highest praise for her faith; the shining instance of the central virtue of the Kingdom was a good Samaritan; a Roman centurion ranked high in its loyalties, and its messengers were sent forth from Olivet to teach all nations.

If anything is central in Christianity it is this obliteration of the lines of division between races and nationalities,

and the inclusion of the world in one brotherhood. Whatever other truths might be made subordinate or secondary, this truth of the divine Fatherhood and the human Brotherhood were to be lifted into the light and held before the thought of the world. To this truth the life of Jesus gave marvelous significance. What he taught that he was. All ranks and races and conditions found in him a friend. Nothing can be clearer than that those who become his true disciples and are made partakers of his spirit will find themselves in fraternal relations with all the children of men. It would seem that in the twentieth century after his birth, after sixty generations of his representatives have spent their lives in teaching what was supposed to be his truth and nearly five hundred millions of the inhabitants of the earth have been enrolled as his adherents, this

fact of the brotherhood of man ought to be so clearly understood that it would be made the foundation of all human relationships.

And yet it is the amazing fact that today, in the earth, twenty or thirty millions of the people who bear his name are not only wholly oblivious of the fact of brotherhood, but are so inflamed with hatred that they are ranged in battle lines trying to kill one another. Already two or three millions of so-called Christians have fallen in this fratricidal strife.

Does not this make it evident that the tribalism which Jesus came to exterminate has triumphed over the fraternalism he came to incarnate and reveal? After nineteen centuries of organized Christianity its representatives in most of the great nations of the earth are bowing down in the camps of the tribal

gods and praying for power to maim and mangle and slay their brother men. How utterly has the law of life which he lived to incarnate and died to enforce been set at naught by the nations of the earth!

In other realms, as we have seen, it has proved its power; it has won great victories over hate and greed; but the nations have despised and rejected it; they would not have this Man to reign over them. The churches which have claimed to represent him, have been faithless here. Ever since the days of Constantine they have been largely subservient to the civil power. Sometimes they have sought to assert their freedom, but often the need of its favor has clouded their judgment. In most of the Christian lands they have been allied with it. And the alliance has kept them in a dependent and subject condition. Their thinking was naturally

shaped by the ideas of the state, as the dyer's hand is subdued to what it works in, and theology ceased to be an interpretation of the Kingdom of the Father and became a reflection of human absolutism. Augustine was the great system builder of Christian theology, and his ruling ideas are borrowed from Roman imperialism. When the dogmatic system finally gets itself shaped, with its articulated framework of laws and penalties and hereditary depravity and imputation and substitution, it is very far from the Sermon on the Mount or the Fifteenth of Luke or the Fourteenth of John. The gospel of the Kingdom with its universal Fatherhood and universal Brotherhood does not fit into it. You cannot preach that gospel with consistency and cogency in its application to national affairs if you believe this theology. You cannot make men believe

that all men are brothers and ought to live in peace together, when you have taught them either that all the unbaptized, or that all the non-elect, or that all the unregenerate are God's enemies whom he hates and means to punish everlastingly. These are "vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction." And where so much scope is left for the exercise of the divine antipathy in dealing with obdurate men, it is unreasonable to expect that men will themselves suppress all their enmities and resentments and treat one another as brothers. What is the use of telling men to love their enemies when they know that God is going to plunge all his enemies into a fiery pit and watch them burning there eternally? Do you expect men to be better than God? It is a vain expectation. And when they get your theology thoroughly digested, and its implica-

tions all worked out, they will tell you at once that the morality of the Sermon on the Mount is a visionary scheme; that it can never be made to work until the Millennium, that force is the only arbiter of human relationships, and that the ultimate right is the right of the strongest. This, on the whole, is the practical belief of Christendom thus far. Industry, politics, internationalism are founded on competition, and competition gives the victory not to the kindest but to the strongest.

Such is the moral equipment with which the church has furnished Christendom. It is not true that nothing higher or better than this has been contributed by the church to human society. Elements and influences of a genuinely Christian character have always, in her darkest days, been illuminating the world. In a preceding chapter we have

sought to make record of these beneficent achievements. In spite of her failures the Christian church has still been the most benign force of history. Wide realms of human association have felt her softening and harmonizing influence. She has kept the New Testament in the hands of men and the words of Jesus and his life and death have made their own mighty impression, in spite of the beggarly elements with which they are often mingled. The worst trouble has been that she has given them to the world in a Book which she has declared to be equally divine and authoritative in every part, so that these words of spirit and life are reduced to the level of the heathenism they were spoken to confute and overthrow. And in all her teaching the church has incorporated large elements of the tribalism and the egoistic imperialism whose bread

she has been eating, which is the flat contradiction of the doctrine of Christ, and which is the efficient cause of war. Thus she has put herself into an ambiguous attitude which cripples her moral leadership and makes her impotent in this which ought to be her day of power. She has the word to speak which would put an end to war, but she is not prepared to speak it, and the world would not listen if she did.

Has not the church, as well as the nations, come to the forks of the road? Is there not quite as much need in the administration of the churches as in the policies of the nations of a radical reconstruction both of theory and of practice? Is not this war a convincing proof that there is something fearfully and fatally wrong with the Christian church? And has it not become sufficiently clear in the discussion that the radical trouble

with the church is that she has ceased to be Christian?

Indeed we might say that she has never been Christian. The organization which was formed in Jerusalem by the disciples immediately after the departure of Jesus started out on lines quite other than those upon which he had been leading them. "Apologetics," says Dr. McGiffert, "was the imperative need of the hour, not simply the proclamation of the Gospel, but the defense of it and the defense of Jesus himself, the preacher of it. Thus the emphasis was changed from the gospel itself to the evidence for its truth; from the message to the messenger. Not the fatherhood of God, but the Messiahship of Jesus, formed the burden of the preaching of the apostles, and so the Master's estimate of values was reversed." [1]

[1] "The Apostolic Age," p. 54.

That shifted emphasis has never been restored. The church has always been much more concerned to apologize for Jesus than to deliver his message. If, instead of arguing to prove his authority, it had obeyed his parting word and taught the things he had given it to teach, the Kingdom would have come ere now with power. The word itself has authority when it is clearly spoken.

The one tragic fact of history is the lapse of the Church of Jesus Christ from her vocation — the failure to grasp and enforce the central truth of the Kingdom of the Father, which Jesus lived and died to reveal. It is for this reason that she herself has been torn into sectarian fragments, and bitter and bloody wars have been fought within her own precincts, by Arian against Athanasian, and Calixtine against Taborite and Protestant against Catholic;

it is for this reason that she has had so little power to stay the strife of social classes; it is for this reason that she has throughout the centuries been the apologist and sometimes the instigator of the wars between nations which have devastated Christendom. Today she stands dumb and despairing in the presence of the worst moral disaster that history records. Is there, for her, today, any word of admonition?

It would seem that the first word of her Master, which was also the first word of his forerunner, must have some significance for her: "Repent, change your mind, for the Kingdom of heaven is here." This debacle of civilization will be but a ghastly horror, an eclipse of faith, if it do not usher in a new day with new international relationships, new bonds of unity, new guarantees of friendship, new hopes of permanent peace.

If such a day as that is coming the Christian church ought to have the vision to see it and the heart to meet it. She will have done far less to bring it in than she ought to have done; it will come, if it comes, rather as the result of a fearful retribution, than as the willing acceptance of the law of life.

But when the nations, taught by whatever fiery tuition, conclude that the way of Christ is the right way to live together, the church ought to be ready to confirm their decision and to strengthen their purpose. But she ought also to be able to see that if she would be of any service in this new day some radical reconstructions will have to take place in her doctrine and in her life. She will have to eliminate the tribalism and the heathenism and the particularism of her theology. She will have to tell the truth about the Bible and put the life-giving spirit

above the brain-befogging and conscience-clogging letter. She will have to get rid of her intolerant and divisive sectarianism and quit unchurching and cursing men for differences of theological opinion. She will have to cast into the abyss a good share of her aberglaube, and her ecclesiastical flummery, and come back to the simplicity that is in Christ. And above all she will have to take the great central truth of the divine Fatherhood with all its corollaries and make it the heart of her teaching and the inspiration of her life.

This means some tremendous changes, no doubt. Does anybody think that the church can meet the issues now impending without some tremendous changes? This war is making, has already made, some tremendous changes in the whole framework of society. The thing that amazes me is that so many

men fail to see how portentous these changes must needs be. They reason about it as though the world were going on after this war is over in the same old groove, at the same old gait, talking the same old patter, tramping up the same old blind alleys. No. It will never again be the same old world. A great voice is saying out of heaven, "Behold, I make all things new."

We are often told that the things which seem to be our only hope of deliverance from hell on earth — such as a League of Peace with an international police force — are not to be hoped for at the close of the war because "if it should come so soon it would certainly be one of the most astounding developments of history." Certainly it will. What else should we expect? This war is the most astounding development of history; should not the reactions which

follow the war be equally astounding? Would anything else be adequate? Is Providence going to cure traumatism of this sort with court plaster and rose water? I think it will take some heroic surgery.

This is the way of life for the nations, and there is no other salvation for the church. Is it too much to hope that there are men of vision who will discern this time?

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